

Communism

Communism (from Latin *communis*, 'common, universal')^{[1][2]} is a philosophical, social, political, and economic ideology and movement whose ultimate goal is the establishment of a communist society, namely a socioeconomic order structured upon the ideas of common ownership of the means of production and the absence of social classes, money,^{[3][4]} and the state.^{[5][6]} As such, communism is a specific form of socialism.

Communism includes a variety of schools of thought which broadly include Marxism and anarchocommunism as well as the political ideologies grouped around both, all of which share the analysis that the current order of society stems from capitalism, its economic system and mode of production, namely that in this system there are two major social classes, the relationship between these two classes is exploitative, and that this situation can only ultimately be resolved through a social revolution.^[7] The two classes are the proletariat (the working class), who make up the majority of the population within society and must work to survive; and the bourgeoisie (the capitalist class), a small minority who derives profit from employing the working class through private ownership of the means of production. According to this analysis, revolution would put the working class in power and in turn establish social ownership of the means of production which is the primary element in the transformation of society towards communism.^[7]

After 1917, a number of states were identified as communist: these states espoused Marxism–Leninism or a variation of it.^[8] Along with social democracy, communism became the dominant political tendency within the international socialist movement by the 1920s.^[9] The emergence of the Soviet Union as the world's first nominally communist state led to communism's widespread association with Marxism–Leninism and the Soviet economic model.^{[1][a][10]} While the term "communist state" is used by Western historians, political scientists and media to refer to countries ruled by communist parties, these states themselves did not describe themselves as communist or claim to have achieved communism: they referred to themselves as socialist states that are in the process of constructing communism.^{[11][12][13][14]} Terms used by communist states include national-democratic, people's democratic, socialist-oriented and workers and peasants' states.^[15] Some economists and intellectuals argue that, in practice, the model under which these nominally communist states operated was in fact a form of state capitalism^{[16][17][18]} or a non-planned administrative or command economy^{[19][20]} and not an actual communist economic model in accordance with most accepted definitions of "communism" as an economic theory.

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Etymology

Communism derives from the French *communisme* which developed out of the Latin roots *communis* and the suffix *isme*.^[21]

Semantically, *communis* can be translated to "of or for the community" while *isme* is a suffix that indicates the abstraction into a state, condition, action, or doctrine. *Communism* may be interpreted as "the state of being of or for the community". This semantic constitution has led to numerous usages of the word in its evolution. Prior to becoming associated with its more modern conception of an economic and political organization, the term was initially used in designating various social situations. The term ultimately came to be primarily associated with Marxism, most specifically embodied in The Communist Manifesto which proposed a particular type of communism.

One of the first uses of the word in its modern sense is in a letter sent by Victor d'Hupay to Restif de la Bretonne around 1785, in which d'Hupay describes himself as an *auteur communiste* ("communist author").^[22] In 1793 Restif first used the term *communism* to describe a social order based on egalitarianism and the common ownership of property.^[23] Restif would go on to use the term frequently in his writing and was the first to describe communism as a form of government.^[24] John Goodwyn Barmby is credited with the first use of the term in English, around 1840.^[21]

Communism and socialism

Since the 1840s, *communism* has usually been distinguished from socialism. The modern definition and usage of the latter would be settled by the 1860s, becoming the predominant term over the words associationist, co-operative and mutualist which had previously been used as synonyms. Instead, *communism* fell out of use during this period.^[25]

An early distinction between *communism* and *socialism* was that the latter aimed to only socialise production, whereas the former aimed to socialise both production and consumption (in the form of free access to final goods).^[26] By 1888, Marxists employed *socialism* in place of *communism* which had come to be considered an old-fashioned synonym for the former. It was not until 1917, with the Bolshevik Revolution, that *socialism* came to refer to a distinct stage between capitalism and communism, introduced by Vladimir Lenin as a means to defend the Bolshevik seizure of power against traditional Marxist criticism that Russia's productive forces were not sufficiently developed for socialist revolution.^[27] A distinction between *communist* and *socialist* as descriptors of political ideologies arose in 1918 after the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party renamed itself to the All-Russian Communist Party, where *communist* came to specifically refer to socialists who supported the politics and theories of Bolshevism, Leninism and later in the 1920s of Marxism-Leninism,^[28] although communist parties continued to describe themselves as socialists dedicated to socialism.^[25]

Both *communism* and *socialism* eventually accorded with the cultural attitude of adherents and opponents towards religion. In Christian Europe, *communism* was believed to be the atheist way of life. In Protestant England, the word *communism* was too phonetically similar to the Roman Catholic communion rite, hence English atheists denoted themselves socialists.^[29] Friedrich Engels argued that in 1848, at the time when The Communist Manifesto was first published, "socialism was respectable on the continent, while communism was not". The Owenites in England and the Fourierists in France were considered respectable socialists while working-class movements that "proclaimed the necessity of total social change" denoted themselves *communists*. This latter branch of socialism produced the communist work of Étienne Cabet in France and Wilhelm Weitling in Germany.^[30] While democrats looked to the Revolutions of 1848 as a democratic revolution which in the long run ensured liberty, equality and fraternity, Marxists denounced 1848 as a betrayal of working-class ideals by a bourgeoisie indifferent to the legitimate demands of the proletariat.^[31]

According to *The Oxford Handbook of Karl Marx*, "Marx used many terms to refer to a post-capitalist society—positive humanism, socialism, Communism, realm of free individuality, free association of producers, etc. He used these terms completely interchangeably. The notion that 'socialism' and 'Communism' are distinct historical stages is alien to his work and only entered the lexicon of Marxism after his death".^[32]

History

Early communism

According to Richard Pipes, the idea of a classless, egalitarian society first emerged in Ancient Greece.^[33] The 5th-century Mazdak movement in Persia (modern-day Iran) has been described as "communistic" for challenging the enormous privileges of the noble classes and the clergy; for criticizing the institution of private property; and for striving to create an egalitarian society.^{[34][35]} At one time or another, various small communist communities existed, generally under the inspiration of Scripture.^[36] In the medieval Christian Church, some monastic communities and religious orders shared their land and their other property.



Thomas More, whose *Utopia* portrayed a society based on common ownership of property

Communist thought has also been traced back to the works of the 16th-century English writer Thomas More. In his 1516 treatise Utopia, More portrayed a society based on common ownership of property, whose rulers administered it through the application of reason. In the 17th century, communist thought surfaced again in England, where a Puritan religious group known as the Diggers advocated the abolition of private ownership of land.^[37] In his 1895 *Cromwell and Communism*,^[38] Eduard Bernstein argued that several groups during the English Civil War (especially the Diggers) espoused clear communistic, agrarian ideals and that Oliver Cromwell's attitude towards these groups was at best ambivalent and often hostile.^[38] Criticism of the idea of private property continued into the Age of Enlightenment of the 18th century through such thinkers as Jean Meslier, Étienne-Gabriel Morelly, Abbé de Mably, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in France.^[39] During the upheaval of the French Revolution, communism emerged as a political doctrine under the auspices of Restif de la Bretonne, Sylvain Maréchal, and Gracchus Babeuf who can, according to James H. Billington, be considered the progenitors of modern communism.^[40]

In the early 19th century, various social reformers founded communities based on common ownership. Unlike many previous communist communities, they replaced the religious emphasis with a rational and philanthropic basis.^[41] Notable among them were Robert Owen, who founded New Harmony, Indiana, in 1825; and

Charles Fourier, whose followers organized other settlements in the United States such as Brook Farm in 1841.^[1]

In its modern form, communism grew out of the socialist movement in 19th-century Europe. As the Industrial Revolution advanced, socialist critics blamed capitalism for the misery of the proletariat—a new class of urban factory workers who labored under often-hazardous conditions. Foremost among these critics were Karl Marx and his associate Friedrich Engels. In 1848, Marx and Engels offered a new definition of communism and popularized the term in their famous pamphlet The Communist Manifesto.^[1]

Soviet Union

The 1917 October Revolution in Russia set the conditions for the rise to state power of Vladimir Lenin's Bolsheviks which was the first time any avowedly communist party reached that position. The revolution transferred power to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in which the Bolsheviks had a majority.^{[42][43][44]} The event generated a great deal of practical and theoretical debate within the Marxist movement. Marx predicted that socialism and communism would be built upon foundations laid by the most advanced capitalist development. However, Russia was one of the poorest countries in Europe with an enormous, largely illiterate peasantry and a minority of industrial workers. Marx had explicitly stated that Russia might be able to skip the stage of bourgeois rule.^[45]

The moderate Mensheviks (minority) opposed Lenin's Bolsheviks (majority) plan for socialist revolution before capitalism was more fully developed. The Bolsheviks' successful rise to power was based upon the slogans such as "Peace, bread and land" which tapped into the massive public desire for an end to Russian involvement in World War I, the peasants' demand for land reform and popular support for the soviets.^[46] The Soviet Union was established in 1922.

Following Lenin's democratic centralism, the Leninist parties were organized on a hierarchical basis, with active cells of members as the broad base. They were made up only of elite cadres approved by higher members of the party as being reliable and completely subject to party discipline.^[47] In the Moscow Trials, many old Bolsheviks who had played prominent roles during the Russian Revolution of 1917 or in Lenin's Soviet government afterwards, including Lev Kamenev, Grigory Zinoviev, Alexei Rykov and Nikolai Bukharin, were accused, pleaded guilty of conspiracy against the Soviet Union, and were executed.^[48]

Cold War

Its leading role in World War II saw the emergence of the Soviet Union as an industrialized superpower, with strong influence over Eastern Europe and parts of Asia. The European and Japanese empires were shattered and communist parties played a leading role in many independence movements. Marxist–Leninist governments modeled on the Soviet Union took power with Soviet assistance in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Romania. A Marxist–Leninist government was also created under Josip Broz Tito in Yugoslavia, but Tito's independent policies led to the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform which had replaced the Comintern and Titoism was branded "deviationist". Albania also became an independent Marxist–Leninist state after World War II.^[49] Communism was seen as a rival of and a threat to western capitalism for most of the 20th century.^[50]



Countries of the world now (red) or previously (orange) having nominally Marxist–Leninist communist governments

Dissolution of the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union was dissolved on December 26, 1991. It was a result of the declaration number 142-H of the Soviet of the Republics of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union.^[51]

The declaration acknowledged the independence of the former Soviet republics and created the Commonwealth of Independent States, although five of the signatories ratified it much later or did not do it at all. On the previous day, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev (the eighth and final leader of the Soviet Union) resigned, declared his office extinct and handed over its powers, including control of the Soviet nuclear missile launching codes, to Russian President Boris Yeltsin. That evening at 7:32, the Soviet flag was lowered from the Kremlin for the last time and replaced with the pre-revolutionary Russian flag.^[52]

Previously from August to December 1991, all the individual republics, including Russia itself, had seceded from the union. The week before the union's formal dissolution, eleven republics signed the Alma-Ata Protocol, formally establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States and declaring that the Soviet Union had ceased to exist.^{[53][54]}

Post-Soviet communism

At present, states controlled by Marxist-Leninist parties under a single-party system include the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Cuba, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea currently refers to its leading ideology as Juche which is portrayed as a development of Marxism-Leninism.

Communist parties, or their descendant parties, remain politically important in several other countries. The South African Communist Party is a partner in the African National Congress-led government. In India as of March 2018, communists lead the government of Kerala. In Nepal, communists hold a majority in the parliament.^[55] The Communist Party of Brazil was a part of the parliamentary coalition led by the ruling democratic socialist Workers' Party until August 2016.

The People's Republic of China has reassessed many aspects of the Maoist legacy, and along with Laos, Vietnam and to a lesser degree Cuba, has decentralized state control of the economy in order to stimulate growth. Chinese economic reforms were started in 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, and since then China has managed to bring down the poverty rate from 53% in the Mao era to just 6% in 2001.^[56] These reforms are sometimes described by outside commentators as a regression to capitalism, but the communist parties describe it as a necessary adjustment to existing realities in the post-Soviet world in order to maximize industrial productive capacity. In these countries, the land is a universal public monopoly administered by the state and so are natural resources and vital industries and services. The public sector is the dominant sector in these economies and the state plays a central role in coordinating economic development.



The Vietnamese Communist Party's poster in Hanoi

Theory

Marxist communism

Marxism is a method of socioeconomic analysis that frames capitalism through a paradigm of exploitation, analyzes class relations and social conflict using a materialist interpretation of historical development and takes a dialectical view of social transformation. Marxism uses a materialist methodology, referred to by Marx and Engels as the materialist conception of history and now better known as historical materialism, to analyze and critique the development of class society and especially of capitalism as well as the role of class struggles in systemic economic, social and political change. First developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the mid-19th century, it has been the foremost ideology of the communist movement. Marxism does not lay out a blueprint of a communist society *per se* and it merely presents an analysis that concludes the means by which its implementation will be triggered, distinguishing its fundamental characteristics as based on the derivation of real-life conditions. Marxism considers itself to be the embodiment of scientific socialism, but it does not model an ideal society based on the design of intellectuals, whereby communism is seen as a state of affairs to be established based on any intelligent design. Rather, it is a non-idealist attempt at the understanding of material history and society, whereby communism is the expression of a real movement, with parameters that are derived from actual life.^[57]



A monument dedicated to Karl Marx (left) and Friedrich Engels (right) in Shanghai

According to Marxist theory, class conflict arises in capitalist societies due to contradictions between the material interests of the oppressed and exploited proletariat—a class of wage laborers employed to produce goods and services—and the bourgeoisie—the ruling class that owns the means of production and extracts its wealth through appropriation of the surplus product produced by the proletariat in the form of profit. This class struggle that is commonly expressed as the revolt of a society's productive forces against its relations of production, results in a period of short-term crises as the bourgeoisie struggle to manage the intensifying alienation of labor experienced by the proletariat, albeit with varying degrees of class consciousness. In periods of deep crisis, the resistance of the oppressed can culminate in a proletarian revolution which, if victorious, leads to the establishment of socialism—a socioeconomic system based on social ownership of the means of production, distribution based on one's contribution and production organized directly for use. As the productive forces continued to advance, socialism would be transformed into a communist society, i.e. a classless, stateless, humane society based on common ownership and distribution based on one's needs.

While it originates from the works of Marx and Engels, Marxism has developed into many different branches and schools of thought, with the result that there is now no single definitive Marxist theory.^[58] Different Marxian schools place a greater emphasis on certain aspects of classical Marxism while rejecting or modifying other aspects. Many schools of thought have sought to combine Marxian concepts and non-Marxian concepts which has then led to contradictory conclusions.^[59] However, there is a movement toward the recognition that historical materialism and dialectical materialism remains the fundamental aspect of all Marxist schools of thought.^[35] Marxism–Leninism and its offshoots are the most well-known of these and have been a driving force in international relations during most of the 20th century.^[60]

Classical Marxism is the economic, philosophical and sociological theories expounded by Marx and Engels as contrasted with later developments in Marxism, especially Leninism and Marxism–Leninism.^[61] Orthodox Marxism is the body of Marxism thought that emerged after the death of Marx and which became the official philosophy of the socialist movement as represented in the Second International until World War I in 1914. Orthodox Marxism aims to simplify, codify and systematize Marxist method and theory by clarifying the perceived ambiguities and contradictions of classical Marxism. The philosophy of orthodox Marxism includes the understanding that material development (advances in technology in the productive forces) is the primary agent of change in the structure of society and of human social relations and that social systems and their relations (e.g. feudalism, capitalism and so on) become contradictory and inefficient as the productive forces

develop, which results in some form of social revolution arising in response to the mounting contradictions. This revolutionary change is the vehicle for fundamental society-wide changes and ultimately leads to the emergence of new economic systems.^[62] As a term, *orthodox Marxism* represents the methods of historical materialism and of dialectical materialism and not the normative aspects inherent to classical Marxism, without implying dogmatic adherence to the results of Marx's investigations.^[63]

Marxist concepts

Class conflict and historical materialism

At the root of Marxism is historical materialism, the materialist conception of history which holds that the key characteristic of economic systems through history has been the mode of production and that the change between modes of production has been triggered by class struggle. According to this analysis, the Industrial Revolution ushered the world into capitalism as a new mode of production. Before capitalism, certain working classes had ownership of instruments utilized in production. However, because machinery was much more efficient, this property became worthless and the mass majority of workers could only survive by selling their labor to make use of someone else's machinery, thus making someone else profit. Accordingly, capitalism divided the world between two major classes, namely that of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.^[64] These classes are directly antagonistic as the latter possesses private ownership of the means of production, earning profit via the surplus value generated by the proletariat, who have no ownership of the means of production and therefore no option but to sell its labor to the bourgeoisie.

According to the materialist conception of history, it is through the furtherance of its own material interests that the rising bourgeoisie within feudalism captured power and abolished, of all relations of private property, only the feudal privilege, thereby taking the feudal ruling class out of existence. This was another key element behind the consolidation of capitalism as the new mode of production, the final expression of class and property relations that has led to a massive expansion of production. It is only in capitalism that private property in itself can be abolished.^[65] Similarly, the proletariat would capture political power, abolish bourgeois property through the common ownership of the means of production, therefore abolishing the bourgeoisie, ultimately abolishing the proletariat itself and ushering the world into communism as a new mode of production. In between capitalism and communism, there is the dictatorship of the proletariat, a democratic state where the whole of the public authority is elected and recallable under the basis of universal suffrage.^[66] It is the defeat of the bourgeois state, but not yet of the capitalist mode of production and at the same time the only element which places into the realm of possibility moving on from this mode of production.

Marxian economics

Marxian economics and its proponents view capitalism as economically unsustainable and incapable of improving the living standards of the population due to its need to compensate for falling rates of profit by cutting employee's wages, social benefits and pursuing military aggression. The communist system would succeed capitalism as humanity's mode of production through workers' revolution. According to Marxian crisis theory, communism is not an inevitability, but an economic necessity.^[67]

Socialization versus nationalization

An important concept in Marxism is socialization versus nationalization. Nationalization is state ownership of property whereas socialization is control and management of property by society. Marxism considers the latter as its goal and considers nationalization a tactical issue, as state ownership is still in the realm of the capitalist mode of production. In the words of Friedrich Engels, "the transformation [...] into State-ownership does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. [...] State-ownership of the productive forces is

not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution".^{[b][68]} This has led some Marxist groups and tendencies to label states based on nationalization such as the Soviet Union as state capitalist.^{[16][17][18][19][20]}

Leninist communism

We want to achieve a new and better order of society: in this new and better society there must be neither rich nor poor; all will have to work. Not a handful of rich people, but all the working people must enjoy the fruits of their common labour. Machines and other improvements must serve to ease the work of all and not to enable a few to grow rich at the expense of millions and tens of millions of people. This new and better society is called socialist society. The teachings about this society are called 'socialism'.

— Vladimir Lenin, *To the Rural Poor* (1903)^[69]

Leninism is the body of political theory, developed by and named after the Russian revolutionary and later-Soviet premier Vladimir Lenin, for the democratic organisation of a revolutionary vanguard party and the achievement of a dictatorship of the proletariat as political prelude to the establishment of socialism. Leninism comprises socialist political and economic theories developed from orthodox Marxism as well as Lenin's interpretations of Marxist theory for practical application to the socio-political conditions of the agrarian, early-20th-century Russian Empire.

Leninism was composed for revolutionary praxis and originally was neither a rigorously proper philosophy nor a discrete political theory. After the Russian Revolution and in *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (1923), György Lukács developed and organised Lenin's pragmatic revolutionary practices and ideology into the formal philosophy of vanguard-party revolution. As a political-science term, Leninism entered common usage in 1922 after infirmity ended Lenin's participation in governing the Russian Communist Party. At the Fifth Congress of the Communist International in July 1924, Grigory Zinoviev popularized the term Leninism to denote "vanguard-party revolution".

Within Leninism, democratic centralism is a practice in which political decisions reached by voting processes are binding upon all members of the communist party. The party's political vanguard is composed of professional revolutionaries that elect leaders and officers as well as to determine policy through free discussion, then this is decisively realized through united action. In the context of the theory of Leninist revolutionary struggle, vanguardism is a strategy whereby the most class-conscious and politically advanced sections of the proletariat or working class, described as the revolutionary vanguard, form organizations in order to draw larger sections of the working class towards revolutionary politics and serve as manifestations of proletarian political power against its class enemies.

From 1917 to 1922, Leninism was the Russian application of Marxian economics and political philosophy, effected and realised by the Bolsheviks, the vanguard party who led the fight for the political independence of the working class. In the 1925–1929 period, Joseph Stalin established his interpretation of Leninism as the official and only legitimate form of Marxism in Russia by amalgamating the political philosophies as Marxism-Leninism which then became the state ideology of the Soviet Union.



Vladimir Lenin statue in Kolkata, West Bengal

Marxism–Leninism

Marxism–Leninism is a political ideology developed by Joseph Stalin.^[70] According to its proponents, it is based in Marxism and Leninism. It describes the specific political ideology which Stalin implemented in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and in a global scale in the Comintern. There is no definite agreement between historians of about whether Stalin actually followed the principles of Marx and Lenin.^[71] It also contains aspects which according to some are deviations from Marxism such as socialism in one country.^{[72][73]}

Social fascism was a theory supported by the Comintern and affiliated communist parties during the early 1930s which held that social democracy was a variant of fascism because it stood in the way of a dictatorship of the proletariat, in addition to a shared corporatist economic model.^[74] At the time, leaders of the Comintern such as Stalin and Rajani Palme Dutt argued that capitalist society had entered the Third Period in which a working-class revolution was imminent, but it could be prevented by social democrats and other fascist forces.^{[74][75]} The term social fascist was used pejoratively to describe social-democratic parties, anti-Comintern and progressive socialist parties and dissenters within Comintern affiliates throughout the interwar period. The social fascism theory was advocated vociferously by the Communist Party of Germany which was largely controlled and funded by the Soviet leadership from 1928.^[75]

During the Cold War, Marxism–Leninism was the ideology of the most clearly visible communist movement and is the most prominent ideology associated with communism.^[60] According to their proponents, Marxist–Leninist ideologies have been adapted to the material conditions of their respective countries and include Castroism (Cuba), Ceaușism (Romania), Gonzalo Thought (Peru), Guevarism (Cuba), Ho Chi Minh Thought (Vietnam), Hoxhaism (anti-revisionist Albania), Husakism (Czechoslovakia), Juche (North Korea), Kadarism (Hungary), Khmer Rouge (Cambodia), Khrushchevism (Soviet Union), Prachanda Path (Nepal), Shining Path (Peru) and Titoism (anti-Stalinist Yugoslavia).

Within Marxism–Leninism, anti-revisionism is a position which emerged in the 1950s in opposition to the reforms of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. Where Khrushchev pursued an interpretation that differed from Stalin, the anti-revisionists within the international communist movement remained dedicated to Stalin's ideological legacy and criticized the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and his successors as state capitalist and social imperialist due to its hopes of achieving peace with the United States. The term Stalinism is also used to describe these positions, but it is often not used by its supporters who opine that Stalin simply synthesized and practiced orthodox Marxism and Leninism. Because different political trends trace the historical roots of revisionism to different eras and leaders, there is significant disagreement today as to what constitutes anti-revisionism. Modern groups which describe themselves as anti-revisionist fall into several categories. Some uphold the works of Stalin and Mao Zedong and some the works of Stalin while rejecting Mao and universally tend to oppose Trotskyism. Others reject both Stalin and Mao, tracing their ideological roots back to Marx and Lenin. In addition, other groups uphold various less-well-known historical leaders such as Enver Hoxha, who also broke with Mao during the Sino-Albanian split.

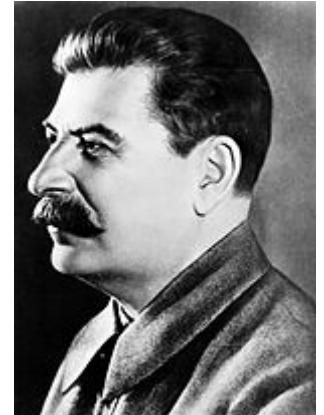
Within Marxism–Leninism, social imperialism was a term used by Mao to criticize the Soviet Union post-Stalin. Mao argued that the Soviet Union had itself become an imperialist power while maintaining a socialist façade.^[76] Hoxha agreed with Mao in this analysis, before later using the expression to also condemn Mao's Three Worlds Theory.^[77]

Stalinism

Stalinism represents Stalin's style of governance as opposed to Marxism–Leninism, the socioeconomic system and political ideology implemented by Stalin in the Soviet Union and later copied by other states based on the Soviet model such as central planning, nationalization and one-party state, along with public ownership of the means of production, accelerated industrialization, pro-active development of society's productive forces

(research and development) and nationalised natural resources. Marxism–Leninism remained after de-Stalinization whereas Stalinism did not. In the last letters before his death, Lenin warned against the danger of Stalin's personality and urged the Soviet government to replace him.^[35]

Marxism–Leninism has been criticized by other communist and Marxist tendencies. They argue that Marxist–Leninist states did not establish socialism, but rather state capitalism.^{[16][17][18][19][20]} According to Marxism, the dictatorship of the proletariat represents the rule of the majority (democracy) rather than of one party, to the extent that co-founder of Marxism Friedrich Engels described its "specific form" as the democratic republic.^[78] Additionally, according to Engels state property by itself is private property of capitalist nature^[b] unless the proletariat has control of political power, in which case it forms public property.^{[c][68]} Whether the proletariat was actually in control of the Marxist–Leninist states is a matter of debate between Marxism–Leninism and other communist tendencies. To these tendencies, Marxism–Leninism is neither Marxism nor Leninism nor the union of both, but rather an artificial term created to justify Stalin's ideological distortion,^[79] forced into the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Comintern. In the Soviet Union, this struggle against Marxism–Leninism was represented by Trotskyism which describes itself as a Marxist and Leninist tendency.



1942 portrait of Joseph Stalin, the longest-serving leader of the Soviet Union

Maoism

Maoism is the theory derived from the teachings of the Chinese political leader Mao Zedong. Developed from the 1950s until the Deng Xiaoping Chinese economic reform in the 1970s, it was widely applied as the guiding political and military ideology of the Communist Party of China and as the theory guiding revolutionary movements around the world. A key difference between Maoism and other forms of Marxism–Leninism is that peasants should be the bulwark of the revolutionary energy which is led by the working class.^[80]

The synthesis of Marxism–Leninism–Maoism which builds upon the two individual theories as the Chinese adaption of Marxism–Leninism did not occur during the life of Mao. After de-Stalinization, Marxism–Leninism was kept in the Soviet Union while certain anti-revisionist tendencies such as Hoxhaism and Maoism argued that such had deviated from its original concept. Different policies were applied in Albania and China which became more distanced from the Soviet Union. From the 1960s, groups who called themselves Maoists, or those who upheld Maoism, were not unified around a common understanding of Maoism, instead having their own particular interpretations of the political, philosophical, economical and military works of Mao. Its adherents claim that as a unified, coherent higher stage of Marxism, it was not consolidated until the 1980s, first being formalized by the Peruvian communist party Shining Path in 1982.^[81] Through the experience of the people's war waged by the party, the Shining Path were able to posit Maoism as the newest development of Marxism.^[81]



Long Live the Victory of Mao Zedong Thought monument in Shenyang

Proponents of Marxism–Leninism–Maoism refer to the theory as *Maoism* itself whereas *Maoism* is referred to as either *Mao Zedong Thought* or *Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong Thought*. Maoism–Third Worldism is concerned with the infusion and synthesis of Marxism–Leninism–Maoism with concepts of non-Marxist Third-Worldism such dependency theory and world-systems theory.

Trotskyism

Trotskyism, developed by [Leon Trotsky](#) in opposition to [Stalinism](#), is a Marxist and Leninist tendency that supports the theory of [permanent revolution](#) and [world revolution](#) rather than the [two-stage theory](#) and Joseph Stalin's [socialism in one country](#). It supported [proletarian internationalism](#) and another communist revolution in the [Soviet Union](#). Rather than representing the [dictatorship of the proletariat](#), Trotsky claimed that the Soviet Union had become a [degenerated workers' state](#) under the leadership of Stalin in which class relations had re-emerged in a new form. Trotsky's politics differed sharply from those of Stalin and [Mao Zedong](#), most importantly in declaring the need for an international proletarian revolution—rather than socialism in one country—and support for a true dictatorship of the proletariat based on democratic principles.



Detail of *Man, Controller of the Universe*, fresco at Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City showing [Leon Trotsky](#), [Friedrich Engels](#) and [Karl Marx](#)

Struggling against Stalin for power in the Soviet Union, Trotsky and his supporters organized into the [Left Opposition](#), the platform of which became known as Trotskyism. Stalin eventually succeeded in gaining control of the Soviet regime and Trotskyist attempts to remove Stalin from power resulted in Trotsky's exile from the Soviet Union in 1929. While in exile, Trotsky continued his campaign against Stalin, founding in 1938 the [Fourth International](#), a Trotskyist rival to the Comintern. In August 1940, Trotsky was assassinated in [Mexico City](#) upon Stalin's orders. Trotskyist currents include [orthodox Trotskyism](#), [third camp](#), [Posadism](#), [Pabloism](#) and [neo-Trotskyism](#).

In Trotskyist political theory, a degenerated workers' state is a dictatorship of the proletariat in which the working class's democratic control over the state has given way to control by a bureaucratic clique. The term was developed by Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed* and in other works. [Deformed workers' states](#) are states where the capitalist class has been overthrown, the economy is largely state-owned and planned, but there is no internal democracy or workers' control of industry. In a deformed workers' state, the working class has never held political power like it did in Russia shortly after the [Bolshevik Revolution](#). These states are considered deformed because their political and economic structures have been imposed from the top (or from outside) and because revolutionary working class organizations are crushed. Like a degenerated workers' state, a deformed workers' state cannot be said to be a state that is transitioning to socialism. Most Trotskyists cite examples of deformed workers' states today as including [Cuba](#), the [People's Republic of China](#), [North Korea](#) and [Vietnam](#). The [Committee for a Workers' International](#) has also included states such as [Burma](#) and [Syria](#) at times when they have had a [nationalized](#) economy.

Eurocommunism

Eurocommunism was a [revisionist](#) trend in the 1970s and 1980s within various [Western European](#) communist parties, claiming to develop a theory and practice of [social transformation](#) more relevant to their region. Especially prominent in [Italy](#), [France](#) and [Spain](#), communists of this nature sought to undermine the influence of the [Soviet Union](#) and its [communist party](#) during the [Cold War](#).^[82] [Enrico Berlinguer](#), secretary of the [Italian Communist Party](#), was widely considered the father of Eurocommunism.^[83]

Libertarian Marxism

Libertarian Marxism is a broad range of economic and political philosophies that emphasize the [anti-authoritarian](#) aspects of [Marxism](#). Early currents of libertarian Marxism, known as [left communism](#),^[84] emerged in opposition to [Marxism-Leninism](#)^[85] and its derivatives such as [Stalinism](#), [Trotskyism](#) and [Maoism](#).^[86]

Libertarian Marxism is also critical of reformist positions such as those held by social democrats.^[87] Libertarian Marxist currents often draw from Marx and Engels' later works, specifically the *Grundrisse* and *The Civil War in France*,^[88] emphasizing the Marxist belief in the ability of the working class to forge its own destiny without the need for a revolutionary party or state to mediate or aid its liberation.^[89] Along with anarchism, libertarian Marxism is one of the main derivatives of libertarian socialism.^[90]

Aside from left communism, libertarian Marxism includes such currents as autonomism, communicization, council communism, De Leonism, the Johnson–Forest Tendency, Lettrism, Luxemburgism, Situationism, Socialisme ou Barbarie, Solidarity, the World Socialist Movement, workerism as well as parts of Freudo-Marxism and the New Left.^[91] Moreover, libertarian Marxism has often had a strong influence on both post-left and social anarchists. Notable theorists of libertarian Marxism have included Antonie Pannekoek, Raya Dunayevskaya, C. L. R. James, Antonio Negri, Cornelius Castoriadis, Maurice Brinton, Guy Debord, Daniel Guérin, Ernesto Scrpanti, Raoul Vaneigem and Yanis Varoufakis,^[92] who claims that Marx himself was a libertarian Marxist.^[93]



Enrico Berlinguer, the secretary of the Italian Communist Party and main proponent of Eurocommunism

Council communism

Council communism is a movement originating in Germany and the Netherlands in the 1920s, whose primary organization was the Communist Workers Party of Germany. Council communism continues today as a theoretical and activist position within both libertarian Marxism and libertarian socialism.

The core principle of council communism is that the government and the economy should be managed by Workers' councils which are composed of delegates elected at workplaces and recallable at any moment. As such, council communists oppose state-run authoritarian state socialism and state capitalism. They also oppose the idea of a revolutionary party since council communists believe that a revolution led by a party will necessarily produce a party dictatorship. Council communists support a workers' democracy, produced through a federation of workers' councils.



Rosa Luxemburg

Accordingly, the central argument of council communism in contrast to those of social democracy and Leninist communism is that democratic workers' councils arising in the factories and municipalities are the natural form of working-class organization and governmental power. This view is opposed to both the reformist and the Leninism ideologies which respectively stress parliamentary and institutional government by applying social reforms on the one hand and vanguard parties and participative democratic centralism on the other.

Left communism

Left communism is the range of communist viewpoints held by the communist left which criticizes the political ideas and practices espoused, particularly following the series of revolutions that brought World War to an end by Bolsheviks and social democrats. Left communists assert positions which they regard as more authentically Marxist and proletarian than the views of Marxism–Leninism espoused by the Communist International after its first congress (March 1919) and during its second congress (July–August 1920).^[94]

Left communists represent a range of political movements distinct from Marxist-Leninists, whom they largely view as merely the left-wing of capital; from anarcho-communists, some of whom they consider to be internationalist socialists; and from various other revolutionary socialist tendencies such as De Leonists, whom they tend to see as being internationalist socialists only in limited instances.^[95]

Bordigism is a Leninist left-communist current named after Amadeo Bordiga, who did consider himself a Leninist and has been described as being "more Leninist than Lenin".^[96]

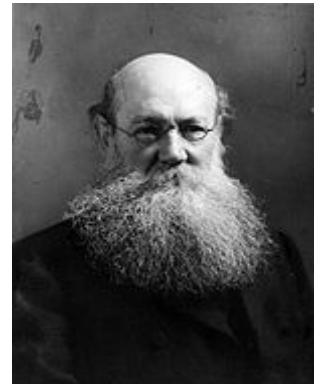
Non-Marxist communism

The dominant forms of communism are based on Marxism, but non-Marxist versions of communism such as Christian communism and anarcho-communism also exist.

Anarcho-communism

Anarcho-communism is a libertarian theory of anarchism and communism which advocates the abolition of the state, private property and capitalism in favor of common ownership of the means of production,^{[97][98]} direct democracy; and a horizontal network of voluntary associations and workers' councils with production and consumption based on the guiding principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need".^{[99][100]}

Anarcho-communism differs from Marxism in that it rejects its view about the need for a state socialism phase prior to establishing communism. Peter Kropotkin, the main theorist of anarcho-communism, argued that a revolutionary society should "transform itself immediately into a communist society", that it should go immediately into what Marx had regarded as the "more advanced, completed, phase of communism".^[101] In this way, it tries to avoid the reappearance of "class divisions and the need for a state to oversee everything".^[101]



Peter Kropotkin, main theorist of anarcho-communism

Some forms of anarcho-communism such as insurrectionary anarchism are egoist and strongly influenced by radical individualism,^{[102][103][104]} believing that anarchist communism does not require a communitarian nature at all. Most anarcho-communists view anarchist communism as a way of reconciling the opposition between the individual and society.^{[d][105][106]} In human history to date, the best-known examples of an anarcho-communist society, i.e. established around the ideas as they exist today and that received worldwide attention and knowledge in the historical canon, are the anarchist territories during the Free Territory during the Russian Revolution, the Korean People's Association in Manchuria and the Spanish Revolution of 1936.

During the Russian Civil War, anarchists such as Nestor Makhno worked through the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine to create and defend anarcho-communism in the Free Territory of the Ukraine from 1919 before being conquered by the Bolsheviks in 1921. In 1929, anarcho-communism was achieved in Korea by the Korean Anarchist Federation in Manchuria (KAFM) and the Korean Anarcho-Communist Federation (KACF), with help from anarchist general and independence activist Kim Chwa-chin, lasting until 1931, when Imperial Japan assassinated Kim and invaded from the south while the Chinese Nationalists invaded from the north, resulting in the creation of Manchukuo, a puppet state of the Empire of Japan. Through the efforts and influence of the Spanish anarchists during the Spanish Revolution within the Spanish Civil War, starting in 1936 anarcho-communism existed in most of Aragon; parts of the Levante and Andalusia; and in the stronghold of Revolutionary Catalonia, before being brutally crushed.

Christian communism

Christian communism is a theological and political theory based upon the view that the teachings of Jesus Christ compel Christians to support religious communism as the ideal social system. As such, many advocates of Christian communism argue that it was taught by Jesus and practiced by the apostles themselves.^[107] Some historians confirm it.^[113]

Christian communism enjoys some support in Russia. For instance, Russian musician Yegor Letov was an outspoken Christian communist. "Communism is the Kingdom of God on Earth," he said in an interview in 1995.^[114]

Criticism

Criticism of communism can be divided into two broad categories, namely that which concerns itself with the practical aspects of 20th century communist states^[115] and that which concerns itself with communist principles and theory.^[116]

Marxism is also subject to general criticism such as that it requires necessary suppression of liberal democratic rights, that there are issues with the implementation of communism, and that there are economic issues such as the distortion or absence of price signals. In addition, empirical and epistemological problems are frequently cited.^{[117][118][119]}

See also

- [American Communist History](#)
- [Anti anti-communism](#)
- [Anti-communist mass killings](#)
- [Commons-based peer production](#)
- [Criticism of Communist party rule](#)
- [Communism by country](#)
- [Communist bandit](#)
- [List of communist parties](#)
- [Mass killings under communist regimes](#)
- [Post-scarcity economy](#)
- [Sociocultural evolution](#)
- [Twentieth Century Communism](#)
- [Outline of Marxism](#)

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- b. Engels, Friedrich. [1880] 1970. "Historical Materialism" (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/ch03.htm>). "But, the transformation—either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into State-ownership—does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies and trusts, this is obvious. And the modern State, again, is only the organization that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments as well of the workers as of

individual capitalists. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine—the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is, rather, brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over. State-ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution."

- c. Engels, Friedrich. [1880] 1970. ""Historical Materialism" (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/ch03.htm>). "The proletariat seizes the public power, and by means of this transforms the socialized means of production, slipping from the hands of the bourgeoisie, into public property. By this act, the proletariat frees the means of production from the character of capital they have thus far borne, and gives their socialized character complete freedom to work itself out."
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